Letters to the Editor of The Times

Mental Health Centers

To the Editor:

News stories about the 2,000 community mental health centers that are "projected" for completion throughout the nation by 1975, and the 23 centers that are currently "planned" for New York City, can create a false feeling of optimism about the progress of mental health programs.

Five billion dollars is a conservative estimate of the cost of construction of the 2,000 centers, and $1.5 billion is a conservative estimate of the annual cost of staff salaries—presuming that the 100,000 psychiatric nurses and 40,000 other professionals could be recruited and trained to staff the centers.

Clearly, the Federal Government must meet most of the costs of implementing the community mental health center idea. The 1961 report of the Joint Commission on Mental Health and Illness, Action for Mental Health, said Federal contributions for mental health should double in five years (reaching $940 million annually) and triple in ten years (reaching $1.75 billion annually).

Only contributions of this magnitude can make community mental health a reality. The much-touted 1963 and 1965 Federal laws make available less than $100 million annually for a limited number of years.

In addition, last year 2,000 students seeking National Institute of Mental Health grants to obtain training in this field were denied them because of lack of funds.

This year's New York City Community Mental Health Board capital budget for construction of mental health centers was cut from a requested $38.6 million to $4.6 million—the greatest cut by far of any city department. At this rate, it would take New York City 31 years to complete 23 centers—half the number required. The pace elsewhere is even slower.

FRANK LEONARD

that are overcrowded as soon as they're built, and divert a small fraction of the gigantic Federal highway appropriation to saving the New Haven, restoring New York Central passenger service and, if we must have planes, building subways to the airports.

Congratulations to Mayor Lindsay on taking the first giant step toward a return to sanity: making it harder and harder to drive cars into the city—as if it weren't hard enough already.

CARLETON H. DAVIS
Old Lyme, Conn., Feb. 9, 1967

Deletions in Kennedy Book

To the Editor:

Because I have been abroad, I have only now read the comments attributed to Richard N. Goodwin in The Times of Jan. 23, in which he asserts that "the publisher and representatives of the Kennedy family recommended many changes" in "The Death of a President." "As a result, almost a third of the book was modified."

This is absurd. No significant deletions were suggested by the publisher, and had I accepted every cut proposed by Kennedy friends and employes, less than one-twentieth of the text would have been altered. Because I declined to sacrifice the integrity of a historical document, conflict arose. The dispute was resolved when Mrs. Kennedy herself read the page proofs. At her request I struck out certain phrases and sentences which she considered personal. Altogether these constituted less than 1 per cent of the book.

Mr. Goodwin is further reported to have said, "almost the entire first chapter was either discarded or rewritten." That is utterly false. My typescript opened with a 95-page prologue. My editorial advisers felt that the incident described on the first two pages would be more effective elsewhere in the book. I agreed, and the switch was made, but nothing was discarded.

It is also charged by Mr. Goodwin that "objectionable passages" of my "original manuscript" were "fictional." This, clearly, is an attempt to discredit the quality of my research. In reply I should like to point out that last April, at his request, I loaned Mr. Goodwin a carbon of that original manuscript. To me and to mutual friends he expressed only admiration for the style and documentation of the work. Later he did make three suggestions, all of which were sensible and which were, therefore, adopted by me.

It does seem unfair that a privileged reader of an unedited version of a manuscript should publicy criticize it two months before copies will be available to reviewers. Judgment then will be appropriate. Judgment now is certainly improper.

WILLIAM MANCHESTER
Middletown, Conn.
Feb. 13, 1967

Anthracite's Role in Clean Air

To the Editor:

The Jan. 31 editorial "To Clean the Nation's Air" referred to "the sulphur compounds created by the burning of coal and oil." It is a common error to fail to distinguish between anthracite (hard coal) and bituminous (soft coal) when discussing pollutants. Both answer to the generic term of coal, it's true, but there is a vast difference in their chemical make-ups.

Nature has endowed anthracite with an ideal chemical composition for avoiding contamination of the air. It is low in gas (volatile matter 2 to 8 per cent) and, therefore, cannot smoke under any conditions and it has an extremly low sulphur content (0.7 per cent).

Anthracite has contributed more to the clean air of cities in northeastern United States over a long period of years than any other fuel. When anthracite was its principal fuel, New York was famed as being the cleanest large city in the world.

New York is still using about three-quarters of a million tons of anthracite annually, and if the other fuels commonly used in New York City were as benign to the atmosphere as anthracite, New York would have clean air to breathe.

Meets City's Law

Anthracite, in addition to having the physical properties to meet New York City's new air pollution control law, has other important advantages to the city. It is a source of fuel supply only 150 miles away; its reserves are ample for several hundred years; and it may readily be used in any solid-fuel burning equipment (hand-fired or automatic) with little or no change in the equipment.

We would greatly appreciate your good offices in setting the record straight to the end that there is no misunderstanding of the fact that anthracite (hard coal) is a benefit rather than a hindrance to New York's clean air program.

J. D. JILLSON
President, Anthracite Institute
Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 2, 1967

Supply Moves in Truce

To the Editor:

Dean Rusk cites North Vietnam for continuing to infiltrate trucks containing supplies and men into South Vietnam during the four-day truce.

It would be interesting to know whether we also continued to ship supplies and personnel into that beleaguered country during this same period.

JOSEPH FARRIS
Bethel, Conn., Feb. 10, 1967